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Judge Pence denies bias charge by Rewald, refuses to step aside

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Federal Judge Martin Pence, accused yesterday by Ronald Rewald of bias and prejudice, refused to step aside in Rewald's case.

Pence agreed that he concluded months ago that it appeared from the evidence Rewald had "run amok with the investors' money" placed in the firm of Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham & Wong.

But he said the request that he step aside from a hearing involving investor Jane Iinuma was legally insufficient.

The same challenge will be made again today when Pence is asked to rule that a house, cars and other property claimed by Rewald in fact belong to his bankrupt company.

Attorney Robert Smith,

representing both Rewald and Iinuma, said in an affidavit that Pence's mind was "totally closed against Rewald, Bishop Baldwin, and all those associated with Bishop Baldwin."

The cause, Smith said, was frequent government intervention with the judge, and Pence's apparent refusal to consider the possibility that the CIA was deeply involved with Rewald and the company.

Yesterday, ruling only on the Iinuma case, Pence responded specifically to Smith's suggestion that the judge's request for information on what money Iinuma got from the company was evidence of bias.

Any trial judge worth his salt, Pence said, would request any evidence which he felt would promote "justice,

fairness, rightness" in his rulings.

Pence did not address a list of other accusations leveled against him by Smith yesterday. They included statements that Smith said Pence had made publicly and privately about Rewald's credibility and about his claims of involvement with the CIA.

Regarding Iinuma, an insurance sales person and once a close friend of Rewald, Pence ruled yesterday she must repay to Bishop Baldwin \$44,810.43 she received, mostly in \$2,000 monthly "investment payments," in excess of the \$61,500 she put into her account.

Bankruptcy controller Thomas Hayes said few investments were made at Bishop Baldwin, and the company was \$3.7 million in the hole a year before it collapsed.